

## Response 2

My responses to the bulleted "provocations" in the area of collaboration are based on my nearly twenty-seven-year involvement in the care and feeding of Slavic, Eurasian, and East European collections, first at the New York Public Library, and since 2008, at Columbia University.

During that time, I have witnessed the death of a long-established (and predictable) system of acquisitions from these regions. This was followed by a chaotic period of transition, during which private firms, many rather ephemeral, replaced state institutions and a very short list of official western representatives. I participated in the slow demise of foreign exchange programs—a death of a thousand cuts--and, since the late 1990s, have seen the return to stability, with far more viable commercial options for supply than in the days of the "iron curtain." I have also had a front row seat on the technological revolution in libraries, with fond and not-so-distant memories of typing claim forms, and the glowing green display of the original RLG Zentec terminals. I have less fond recollections of puzzling over how, and whether, an RLG Conspectus 4 at Harvard compared to a 4 at my home institution.

More recently, I have had the opportunity to participate in the great experiment that is 2CUL, and of working closely with my colleagues in BorrowDirect (an expedited ILL network made up of the eight Ivies, M.I.T., and, most recently, the University of Chicago), to strategize ways in which we might best leverage BorrowDirect's game-changing rapid ILL system to serve our client base to an unprecedented depth and breadth.

Responding to the four bullet points:

### **Point One:**

Our Provocateur suggests that what may be needed are "innovative partnerships on the international level." While this isn't elaborated upon, this may be a suggestion to partner with our institutional counterparts in other world regions, in an as-yet-undefined way. I look forward to hearing more about what he/she has in mind.

I would argue that a number of us, working collectively with our in-country vendors, are already engaged in implementing "innovative international partnerships" and concrete domestic institutional cooperation, with the intention to broaden and deepen such collaborations still further.

Some examples:

The 2CUL partnership. "2CUL" is a multi-dimensional cooperative agreement between the libraries of Cornell and Columbia, ranging from closer integration of technical

services, to coordinated collection development. We are two libraries, with two staffs and two budgets, yet one commitment to work more efficiently and effectively. My main involvement is in the area of coordinated collection development and public service. I manage two rather substantial budgets, and provide reference services to both campuses, though I am physically in New York City.

When it comes to area studies, 2CUL is by no means a "one-size-fits-all" partnership, and different models govern collection development and public service in Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Latin American studies. This flexibility is a great strength of the 2CUL approach, as no one model is forced onto the reality of the situation.

In my bailiwick, there are some 16 different joint approval plans with a mix of in-country, West European, and U.S. vendors, with a "no duplication" rule in place (exceptions are made for specific faculty requests and multivolume reference works on a case-by-case basis).

Although there are some subject and institution-specific carve-outs (e.g., Cornell has a particular interest in the archaeology of the Caucasus), for the most part our vendors determine which titles go where. 2CUL offers a 24- to 48-hour delivery window between campuses, and faculty and students have mutual borrowing privileges.

Is it working? Our duplication rates for Russian (working principally with a common vendor based in Moscow) dropped from 14% for 2008 (i.e., pre-2CUL) imprints, to under 3% for 2011 imprints, and much of that 3% is for multivolume sets. Because between us (and in coordination with other institutions, as noted below) we can cover comprehensively the core analog materials in the field, I have been able to direct a certain amount of funding towards both the acquisition of primary resources and the pursuit of digital initiatives with foreign institutions and vendors.

Second example. As many of you know, Columbia shares an offsite storage facility with NYPL and Princeton, the so-called Research Collections and Preservation Consortium (ReCaP for short). Three years ago, I made a survey of the rate of duplication for Polish, Czech, and Russian titles between the three ReCaP partners. I discovered that for Polish, the rate of duplication was around 29%; for Czech and Russian, hovering around 17%. In the case of Czech and Polish, all three libraries use the same in-country vendors. Obviously a huge waste of resources, and so we put together a common approval plan, and worked with our vendors to make our objectives clear. The duplication rate for recent imprints has dropped to under 3%, while the breadth and depth of our research collections have grown. We are now collectively able to invest an additional \$26,000 in Polish resources—print, film, or electronic—every year.

Third and final example. User-friendly ILL networks like BorrowDirect are the bedrock upon which any "new thinking" in the area of coordinated collection development must be based. In the spring of 2011 and 2012, my colleagues from the quantitatively largest Slavic & East European collections in the BorrowDirect network—2CUL, Princeton, Yale, and Harvard—met to strategize ways we could reduce duplication, while still

offering broadly-based collections to our users present and future. At a meeting in New Haven in April of last year, we divided responsibility for most of the languages we cover and initiated a strategy to collect analog publications from Russia's vast regions more deeply and systematically. Although staff departures at two of our BorrowDirect collections have slowed the full implementation of our recommendations, we are moving ahead, bringing ALL of our BorrowDirect partners into the discussion, and pursuing levels of cooperation between research libraries that was unthinkable before the advent of BorrowDirect.

Again, to underscore, small, relatively easy-to-implement actions can maintain America's remarkably diverse research collections, keep faculties and students content, and maximize every collection development dollar. Where this fails is when administrations say, "Hmmm...we can now reduce our spending on [fill in blank]," a step down a slippery slope to mediocrity, or to an unfair over-reliance on one or the other partner. There must be a firm commitment by partnered institutions to stay the course financially over the long haul.

## **Point Two:**

Electronic resources present a much more complex issue, entangled in international intellectual property issues, the small-print of licensing agreements, and corporate balance sheets. In my area, past attempts to negotiate a single license for both Cornell and Columbia have met unyielding resistance. The best I have been able to do is to secure slightly better percentage discounts for both.

That being said, in recent years, multi-library deals *have* been cut with Western commercial publishers. For example, Oxford's "two e-, one print" agreement with Columbia, NYU and NYPL. We certainly must continue to probe and press.

In my world area, you have a much lower percentage of e-versus-print publishing than in the West. This is due likely to cultural preferences, and challenges posed by a more cash-reliant population and widespread piracy. So, for the near future, e-books will represent only a small part in our acquisitions intake. Digitization work by the national libraries in Eastern Europe has had mixed results. Some have tried to work very systematically and in a sustained way; others have taken a more scattershot approach to what they do; while others have not done much at all. They are under the same kinds of fiscal pressures as we are.

In the area of IP and license negotiation, I am somewhat skeptical about the utility of working with too large a body of institutions in an international context. For example, I am responsible for materials in 28 core languages, and probably another sixty minority languages, all with their own copyright laws. I will be interested to hear more from our Provocateur about the strategies in mind.

At Columbia University Libraries, we are fortunate to have on staff a specialist in copyright, Dr. Kenneth Crews. Whenever any of us gets a little too pie-in-the-sky

dreamy about e-resources and sharing, Kenny is available to talk us down. The shifting sands of international copyright need to be carefully addressed, and very much on a case-by-case basis.

### **Point Three:**

Web archiving is an area of great importance. Here is the problem: who will be doing the searching, selecting, securing the rights, and then providing the institutional infrastructure for archiving? This relates to both Themes II and III as well. People in my position are being stretched mighty thin. Presently, the Digital Committee of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, of which I am chair, is trying to pull such a project together. The challenge is that we are being pulled in many other directions as well, and progress is painfully slow in an environment of proliferating sites.

What worked very well in the case of the Human Rights web archiving project at Columbia was that the responsibility for web crawling, rights securing, and site creation fell to a team of individuals with the technical expertise—and the mandate—to focus on just that activity. It seems to me that the creation of some membership-based entity for that purpose, in a wide variety of subjects—a Hathi Trust, if you will, for web archiving—would be a worthy investment.

### **Point Four:**

The success of the "one bibliographer, two (or three) collections" model depends in large measure on the dynamic "on the ground."

With 2CUL, both Slavic and East European collections are historic. Quantitatively, they rank among the biggest in the nation, and our combined acquisitions budget is surely one of the largest in North America. I spend a great deal of my time collection building, in all formats, for both of these libraries in a coordinated way, and as my response to Point One indicates, I think it is proving to be an exceptionally efficient way to build collections.

In terms of liaison work, my door (physical and virtual) is always open. Surveys of Cornell faculty indicate they are happy with my work and my responsiveness. The fact that—aside from regular visits to Ithaca—I am sitting at a desk in NYC does not seem to have adversely impacted reference services.

It works in part because I work hard to make it work, but also it has to do with differing campus dynamics. At Columbia, we have a large and diverse graduate student and faculty population. Programming is robust. At Cornell, I serve a proportionately smaller faculty and (with the exception of the history department) a predominantly *undergraduate* population. Thanks to an outstanding general reference staff at Cornell, many of the kinds of questions asked by undergraduates are fielded in Ithaca, and only

the advanced undergraduate and graduate populations (as well as faculty) turn to me for more specialized help.

More than this, I invest a great deal of time seeking out, meeting with, and informing faculties and students on both campuses. Through a twice yearly *Newsnotes*, distributed through campus listservs, as well as the active pursuit of face-time, I have built bonds of trust on both campuses.

This model won't work for every pairing or group of institutions. Indeed, within 2CUL itself, there are variants. For example, given the many languages of South Asia, the parity of programs, and the collecting traditions of both Cornell and Columbia, we *coordinate* collection development, yet maintain two campus-based librarians.

The key to success is basing whatever manner and degree of inter-institutional cooperation on a sound knowledge of current realities and collecting strengths of the individual partners. Attempting to force a pre-conceived model onto a situation will only end in failure.